

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 383

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAHORE 0412

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PK

SUBJECT: BHUTTO SAYS PAKISTAN IN SAFE HANDS NOW

REF: LAHORE 0406

SUMMARY: IN SPEECH AT GUJRANWALA APRIL 4 DURING PUNJAB TOUR, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO USED HIS VERSION OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO SPLIT BETWEEN EAST AND WEST PAKISTAN TO ILLUSTRATE CONTENTION THAT KABUL AND DOMESTIC OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE TRYING TO BREAK UP REMAINDER OF NATION. HE CHARGED THAT MUJIB'S SIX POINT PROGRAM OF 1970-71 HAD BEEN AUTHORED BY "FOREIGN CONSPIRATORS" (OBVIOUSLY INDIA) AND ASSERTED IT HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO COMPLETELY DISMEMBER PAKISTAN. HE VOWED HE WOULD NOT ALLOW THOSE INVOLVED IN PRESENT "INTRIGUES" THE "LIBERTY" WHICH EX-PRESIDENT YAHYA HAD AFFORED MUJIB. RECURRING RUMORS THAT GOP IS PREPARING FOR NATIONAL ELECTIONS PROMPT US TO CONCLUDE THAT BHUTTO IS ENDEAVORING TO ABSOLVE HIMSELF OF BLAME FOR LOSS OF EAST PAKISTAN FOR WHICH MANY STILL CONSIDER HIM PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN HIS SECOND SPEECH OF LAHORE DIVISION TOUR APRIL 4, PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO TOLD CROWD AT GUJRANWALA THAT DESPITE CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES PAKISTAN IS "NOW IN SAFE HANDS" UNDER HIS GOVERNMENT. ELABORING, HE RECALLED THAT DURING 1970 ELECTIONS PRESIDENT YAHYA GAVE SHEIKH MUJIB "FREE HAND" WHICH HAD ENABLED AWAMI LEAGUE TO "PURSUE HIS DESTRUCTIVE SIX POINT PROGRAM DOLED OUT TO HIM BY HIS FOREIGN COLLABORATORS." NOTING THAT RESULT HAD BEEN BREAKUP OF PAKISTAN, BHUTTO VOWED HE WOULD "NEVER ALLOW SUCH LIBERTY" TO THOSE WHO WERE TRYING TO FURTHER DISMEMBER COUNTRY.

2. ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PAKISTAN TIMES NEWS REPORT APRIL 5, BHUTTO "CHOSE SIX POINT PROGRAM APPARENTLY AS HIS MAIN SUBJECT...TO EXPLAIN IN A LOGICAL MANNER... THAT SUPPORT GIVEN AT PRESENT BY OPPOSITION PARTIES TO DEFUNCT NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY AND KABUL...WAS ANOTHER LINK IN THE CHAIN OF CONSPIRACIES AND INTRIGUES WHICH WERE HATCHED INSIDE AS WELL AS OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY TO SUBVERT THE UNITY OF THE NATION." BHUTTO ALSO BLAMED SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN ON "SARDARS WHO EXPLOITED THE POOR MASSES." HE ASKED WHY THEY AND THEIR "RED SHIRT SUPPORTERS" HAD NOT RAISED DEMANDS FOR "PAKHTOONISTAN, SINDHU DESH OR AZAD BALUCHISTAN" BEFORE CREATION OF PAKISTAN.

3. MAINTAINING THAT "TIMSFHAD PASSED WHEN PAKISTAN WAS IN DANGER," BHUTTO ASSERTED THAT GOP DESIRES "FRIENDLIEST" RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORS, THOUGH IT "COULD NOT OVERLOOK" KASHMIR ISSUE BECAUSE DISPUTE CONTINUES TO EXIST. HE EXPRESSED HOPE OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD "SEE THE LIGHT OF REASON" AND END BOYCOTT OF NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES, THOUGH HE REFUSED TO COMPROMISE WITH OPPOSITION AND SAID HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT OPPOSITION OR AFGHAN "CONDITIONS" (E.E.,REMOVAL OF BAN ON NAP AND RELEASE OFSITS LEADERS) FOR END OF ASSEMBLY BOYCOTT. HE CHIDED OPPOSITION FOR USING MOSQUES FOR POLITICAL MEETINGS AND ASKED THEM TO REMEMBER THAT "SECTION 144 (BAN ON PUBLIC MEETINGS) IS NOT IN FORCE IN THE ASSEMBLY."

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4. PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT MUJIB HAD INTRODUCED HIS SIX POINTS AT ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE (FEBRUARY 1969 -- BHUTTOO DID NOT ATTEND), AND WHEN HE (BHUTTO) HAD LATER ASKED HIM TO EXPLAIN POINTS, MUJIB HAD RETORTED THAT IT WAS UNNECESSARY TO ELABORATE BECAUSE "EVERYONE UNDERSTOOD IT." BHUTTO TOLD GUJRANWALA AUDIENCE HE CERTAINLY DID UNDERSTAND SIX POINTS, AND ASSERTED THAT MUJIB'S PLATFORM WAS IN FACT "AIMED AT COMPLETE DISMEM-

BERMENT OF PAKISTAN." HE CLAIMED THAT HE AND HIS PEOPLES PARTY HAD PREVENTED DISINTEGRATION OF REMAINDER OF PAKISTAN BY OPPOSING SIX POINTS AND MUJIB.

5. COMMENT: RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING RETURN OF MUSTAFA KHAR AS GOVERNOR OF PUNJAB AND RE-ELECTION OF FORMER GOVERNOR QURESHI TO PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY, HAVE REGENERATED RUMORS IN LAHORE THAT BHUTTO MAY BE PLANNING NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN NEAR FUTURE. IN PAST, MANY LAHORIS HAVE DOUBTED THAT PRIME MINISTER WOULD DARE HOLD ELECTIONS, PUBLISH HAMOODUR RAHMAN REPORT (ON EAST PAKISTAN AFFAIR) OR RELEASE YAHYA KHAN FROM HOUSE ARREST BECAUSE ANY OF THOSE ACTIONS MIGHT REVEAL THAT BHUTTO'S OWN INTRANSIGENCE WAS PRIMARY FACTOR IN PROMPTING YAHYA TO CRACK DOWN ON BENGALIS IN MARCH 1971. WE BHUTTO'S GUJRANWALA SPEECH, OSTENSIBLY AIMED AT CURRENT SQUABBLES WITH DOMESTIC OPPOSITION, REPRESENTS INITIATION OF CAMPAIGN TO PRESENT PUBLIC WITH CALCULATED EXPLANATION THAT HIS 1969-71 ACTIVITIES WERE DESIGNED TO PREVENT WEST PAKISTAN FROM DISINTEGRATING. HOWEVER, WE WOULD EXPECT OPPOSITION TO NOTE HIS CONSPICUOUS SKIRTING OF HIS ROLE IN COLLAPSE OF YAHYA-MUJIB NEGOTIATIONS, AND CHARGE HIM WITH MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPLIT-OFF OF EAST WING. IN THAT EVENT BHUTTO MIGHT BANK ON FACT THAT PUBLIC HAS IN PAST THREE YEARS TENDED TO PUT TRAUMATIC MEMORIES OF 1971 DEBACLE OUT OF MIND AND WOULD PREFER NOT TO THINK OF IT. BUT MEMORIES ARE LONG HERE AND ONLY TIME WILL TELL. SPENGLER

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